N° 71. SATURDAY, *June* 10, 1786.

Quærite nunc habeat quam nostra superbia causam.
OVID.

THERE is no complaint more common than that which is made against the pride of wealth. The claim of superiority which rests upon a circumstance so adventitious as that of suddenly-acquired riches, is universally decried as the insolent pretension of mean and illiberal minds, and is resisted with a greater degree of scorn and indignation, than perhaps any other encroachment of vanity or self-importance.

Yet one might observe in those who are loudest in the censure of this weakness, a certain shame of being poor, which in a great measure justifies the pride of being rich. One may trace this in their affectation of indifference to all those pleasures and conveniencies which riches procure, and in the eulogium they often make, in despite of their own real feelings, of the opposite circumstances. When they are at pains to declare how much better the plain dish and home-brewed liquor suits their taste than the high-

high-seasoned ragout and the high-priced wine, what is it but disguising their inability to procure the luxury under the pretence of their preferring its opposite. Poverty, in this case, flies from her own honourable tattered colours, to join the fresh and flaunting standard of Wealth; she allows the power of those very external circumstances by which Wealth lays claim to a superiority. The dignity of her station should be supported on other grounds: the little value of those external circumstances in which Wealth has the advantage, when compared with the virtues and qualities which money cannot buy, when set in competition with that native purity and elevation of mind, which in the acquisition of wealth we frequently forfeit, and in its possession we frequently destroy.

Both in those who possess riches and in those who want them, false pretension often defeats itself. It would often be for the honour of Wealth if he could lay down his insolence, and for the happiness of Poverty if she could smooth her scorn. True benevolence and delicacy would teach both their proper duties, and preserve those cordial charities of life, which, in different stations and in different circumstances, promote alike the comfort of individuals and the general advantage of society.

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But it is only over minds of a higher order that external circumstances do not possess a power to push them from that equilibrium in which virtue and happiness reside. Ordinary men will equally feel the inflation of prosperity, and the harshness of a less favourable situation; will in the one case incur the contempt and derision of the world, and in the other experience the grating of a ruffled spirit. Moderation and wisdom would teach the one to procure respect, and the other to attain good humour.

I remember some years ago,—it was during the last war, and it is of no importance that I have forgot the exact date,—being invited to dine at the house of Mr. *Draper*, one of the most considerable merchants in this country. Mr. Draper twenty years ago was not worth a shilling; but by a course of industry, and great intelligence in his profession, he is reported since that time to have realised a very great fortune.

The principal part of our company, I found, upon entering the house, consisted of *Sir William Roberts*, his Lady, and children. Sir William is a country gentleman, the representative of a very old and respectable family, whose ancestors were once in possession of a great estate; but partly from a want of œconomy in some of its proprietors, and partly from the change in manners,

manners, and the mode of living, it is now dwindled down to an inconſiderable amount. Sir William, however, ſtill feels ſtrongly the pride of ancient family, and is apt to be hurt by the riſe of thoſe *new* men who are but of yeſterday, and yet overtop him in wealth.

When I entered the drawing-room the company were pretty generally aſſembled. Sir William's manner attracted my notice, and I found in it the moſt finiſhed complaiſance and attention. There was a degree of politeneſs which carried in its appearance the utmoſt reſpect and condeſcenſion to Mr. Draper and his family; at the ſame time there was a formal diſtance, which was calculated to prevent them from uſing any familiarity with him; and, inſtead of ſhewing that Sir William really felt high reverence for the company, contained evident marks of his conſidering himſelf as much above them. We ſtoop as well as riſe with difficulty; 'tis only on even ground that we carry ourſelves eaſily.

Draper's manner was very different. Without being in the leaſt moved by Sir William's formal obeiſance, he went on in his uſual way, giving a diſplay of the richneſs of his houſe and furniture. I had not been long in the company when he took occaſion to obſerve, that he never knew the times ſo bad as now, and never was money ſcarcer. This very morning, continued he,

he, I was applied to for payment of a bond of L.10,000, againſt next Whitſun-term; but inſtead of waiting for the term, I gave orders that the money ſhould be paid *immediately*. Sir William looked, and was ſilent.

At this time there came into the room a ſon of Mr. Draper's, a boy about ten years of age. The boy was at the public ſchool of the city; and that very day, agreeably to a pretty general cuſtom, the ſcholars had been making a preſent or offering, as it is called, in money, to their maſters. It is the practice, in ſuch caſes, for children of rich parents to vie with one another who ſhall give the greateſt preſent; and the vanity of the parents is generally as much intereſted on the occaſion as that of the ſons. "Papa," ſays young Draper, "I was King at "ſchool to day, having given the higheſt of-"fering." Sir William ſaid nothing; but his ſon, a lively little fellow, about the ſame age, and in the ſame claſs with Mr. Draper's ſon, ſprung forward, and gave him a blow in the face, which ſet him a-crying. This incident produced ſome confuſion, but the company was at length compoſed.

Dinner was now ſerved up. It conſiſted of two magnificent courſes and a deſert; and Mr. Draper frequently obſerved, that part of the diſhes came from his little farm in the Weſt-In-

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dies. Sir William eat but of one diſh, obſerving, that he always found his health and his appetite beſt when he dined plainly.

After dinner, a great variety of wines were ſet upon the table. Sir William, inſtead of drinking the high-priced French and Hungarian wines, taſted nothing but a little Port and water; repeating his former obſervation, that as he eat, ſo he regulated his drinking, for his ſtomach's ſake.

In a little time one of the ſervants brought in Mr. Draper's letters. Mr. Draper looked them over, and then began to talk of politics. He ſaid, he had got a variety of important intelligence in the diſpatches he had received, and talked with the confidence of a rich man, whoſe credit in point of information was as unimpeachable as in point of wealth. He mentioned, in particular, information which that day's poſt had brought him, of the deſtination of a certain ſecret expedition then going on, and that he knew well the troops were about that time making good their landing at the appointed place. Sir William had, juſt the day before, received a letter from a couſin of his, the ſecond in command on that expedition, telling him that the troops were not yet ſailed, and that their object was ſtill unknown. Sir William ſaid nothing of this, but allowed Mr.

Draper

Draper to plume himſelf on his ſuperior inform-ation; only I, who knew the circumſtance, ob-ſerved a ſmile on the Baronet's face, of which I could tranſlate all the conſcious ſuperiority.

My attention was now turned to the younger members of the two families. I obſerved Mr. Draper's eldeſt ſon, a good-looking lad of four and twenty, paying very particular attention to the eldeſt Miſs Roberts, next whom he happened to be ſeated. This attention was not unob-ſerved by the parents. Mr. Draper, with all his attachment to wealth, was not without the am-bition of connecting his children with ancient blood; and an alliance with the family of the Robertſes, who had long been at the head of the county, and had frequently repreſented it in parliament, would not have been diſagreeable to him. As the Drapers had hitherto triumphed in their wealth, ſo now the Robertſes began to triumph in their anceſtry. Mr. Draper obſerv-ed, that his was as yet but a young family, and ſaid ſomething of the high reſpect he had for the family of Sir William Roberts; how happy it made him that his preſent company had eat a bit of mutton with him, and what ſatisfaction it would give him to cultivate a cloſer friend-ſhip and connection with them. He therefore propoſed that the company ſhould drink a bumper to their better acquaintance; and in-

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ſiſted that Sir William ſhould give up his Port and water, and drink the bumper in Burgundy.—— Upon this Miſs Roberts drew off her chair as far as ſhe could from young Mr. Draper: Lady Roberts bridled up—Mrs. Draper bridled up in return—Sir William drank off the bumper of Burgundy.

To break through the aukward ſilence which this had occaſioned, I ſuggeſted that one of the young ladies ſhould give us a ſong; which propoſal was acquieſced in. Miſs Draper ſung an Italian air, which ſhe had learned of a celebrated Maſter. Her father took occaſion to tell the price of his leſſons. "It is now your "turn," ſaid he to Miſs Roberts. "She never "ſings," ſaid her father, ſomewhat ſternly. His daughter bluſhed, and was ſilent. Soon after the ladies withdrew. The remainder of the afternoon was ſpent in Sir William's drinking his Port and water, and in Mr. Draper and the greateſt part of his company getting fluſtered in Burgundy and Claret. When at laſt, upon a meſſage from Lady Roberts, Sir William joined her and his children in the lobby, and went off in the family-coach drawn by four horſes, which had been employed in that ſervice for fifteen years, and were driven by poſtilions with rich but old-faſhioned liveries.